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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MU](#)

SUBJECT: GCC SUMMIT SHIFTS TO DOHA

**¶1.** (U) Media reports on August 6 publicly confirmed the shifting of the Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) annual summit from Muscat to Doha. The media announced that Oman's Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs had delivered a note from the Sultan to the Emir of Qatar requesting that the venue for the December 2007 event be moved on account of the extensive damage caused by Tropical Cyclone Gonu in June.

**¶2.** (SBU) Comment. The public announcement of the venue's change confirmed what most Embassy contacts had known weeks before. While the cyclone greatly affected Oman's hospitality sector, Embassy contacts report that there was already considerable concern over whether several large hotels currently undergoing renovation would have been ready in time for the December event, including Muscat's Al-Bustan Palace Hotel, which had been scheduled to host the visiting GCC heads of state. Furthermore, it was not clear whether major road construction in front of the airport would have been completed in time for the summit. Through this request, the government has gracefully obtained an additional year to ensure that Muscat will be ready to receive its GCC counterparts by December 2008. End Comment.

GRAPPO